

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 3, 9, and 20-25 without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein.

Please amend Claims 1, 2, 4-7, and 17-19, and add Claims 26-38 as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) An image processing method comprising:

an input step of sequentially inputting image data corresponding to plural partial areas obtained by a dividing one-page image;

a judgement step of judging whether the input image data corresponds to a margin area or a non-margin area;

a detection step of detecting whether or not the image data corresponding to the non-margin area represents at least a part of a specific image; and

a control step of controlling printing output of the image data corresponding to the non-margin area, in accordance with the detected result in said detection step,

wherein when a ratio of margin pixels included in the image represented by the input image data is equal to or larger than a predetermined value, said judgement step judges that the input image data corresponds to the margin area.

2. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 1, wherein each partial area corresponds to a respective band obtained by dividing the one-page image into strip-shaped bands, and the printing output is performed one band at a time in the unit of band obtained by dividing one page, and the each partial area corresponds to each band.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Currently Amended) ~~A method according to Claim 1;~~ An image processing method comprising:

an input step of sequentially inputting image data corresponding to plural partial areas obtained by dividing a one-page image;

a judgement step of judging whether the input image data corresponds to a margin area or a non-margin area;

a detection step of detecting whether or not the image data corresponding to the non-margin area represents at least a part of a specific image; and

a control step of controlling printing output of the image data corresponding to the non-margin area, in accordance with the detected result in said detection step,

wherein said detection step detects whether or not predetermined electronic watermark information has been embedded in the image data corresponding to the non-margin area.

5. (Currently Amended) A storage medium which computer-readably stores a program including:

an input step of sequentially inputting image data corresponding to plural partial areas obtained by dividing a one-page image;

a judgment step of judging whether the input image data corresponds to a margin area or a non-margin area;

a detection step of detecting whether or not the image data corresponding to the non-margin area represents at least a part of a specific image; and

a control step of controlling printing output of the image data corresponding to the non-margin area, in accordance with the detected result in said detection step,

wherein when a ratio of margin pixels included in the image represented by the input image data is equal to or larger than a predetermined value, said judgement step judges that the input image data corresponds to the margin area.

6. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus comprising:

input means for sequentially inputting image data corresponding to plural partial areas obtained by dividing a one-page image;

judgment means for judging whether the input image data corresponds to a margin area or a non-margin area;

detection means for detecting whether or not the image corresponding to the non-margin area represents at least a part of a specific image; and

control means for controlling printing output of the image data corresponding to the non-margin area, in accordance with the detected result of said detection means,

wherein when a ratio of margin pixels included in the image represented by the input image data is equal to or larger than a predetermined value, said judgement means judges that the input image data corresponds to the margin area.

7. (Currently Amended) An image processing method comprising:

an input step of inputting image information according to an image;

a block selection step of selecting, in the image information input in said input step, the image information of a block having a predetermined size;

a specific image judgment step of judging whether or not the input image corresponds to a specific image having a predetermined feature, in accordance with the image information of the block; and

a process step of processing the input image in accordance with the judged result in said specific image judgement step,

wherein said block selection step selects the blocks arranged at random positions.

8. (Original) A method according to Claim 7, wherein said block selection step selects the blocks arranged at dispersed positions.

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Original) A method according to Claim 7, wherein said block selection step selects the blocks arranged at a certain interval.

11. (Original) A method according to Claim 7, wherein, when it is judged in said specific image judgment step that the input image corresponds to the specific image, said process step stops inputting of the image.

12. (Original) A method according to Claim 7, wherein said specific image judgment step judges whether or not the input image corresponds to the specific image, by extracting an electronic watermark of the input image with a software process.

13. (Original) A method according to Claim 7, wherein the image is input by a flatbed scanner.

14. (Original) A method according to Claim 7, wherein, when it is judged in said specific image judgment step that the input step image corresponds to the specific image, said process step does not perform a printer driver process to the input image.

15. (Original) A method according to Claim 7, wherein said process step displays the judged result in said specific image judgment step.

16. (Original) A method according to Claim 7, wherein the blocks are selected like checkers.

17. (Currently Amended) ~~A method according to Claim 7,~~ An image processing method comprising:
an input step of inputting image information according to an image;
a block selection step of selecting, in the image information input in said input step, the image information of a block having a predetermined size;

a specific image judgment step of judging whether or not the input image corresponds to a specific image having a predetermined feature, in accordance with the image information of the block; and

a process step of processing the input image in accordance with the judged result in said specific image judgement step,

wherein said input step inputs the image information of a band area having a predetermined size from the image, and said block selection step selects the image information of the block having the predetermined size within the band area.

18. (Currently Amended) A storage medium which computer-readably stores a program including:

an input step of inputting image information according to an image;

a block selection step of selecting, in the image information input in said input step, the image information of a block having a predetermined size;

a specific image judgment step of judging whether or not the input image corresponds to a specific image having a predetermined feature, in accordance with the image information of the block; and

a process step of processing the input image in accordance with the judged result in said specific image judgment step,

wherein said block selection step selects the blocks arranged at random positions.

19. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus comprising:
input means for inputting image information according to an image;
block selection means for selecting, in the image information input by said input means, the image information of a block having a predetermined size;
specific image judgment means for judging whether or not the input image corresponds to a specific image having a predetermined feature, in accordance with the image information of the block; and
process means for processing the input image in accordance with the judged result of said specific image judgment means,
wherein said block selection means selects the blocks arranged at random positions.

20. - 25. (Cancelled)

26. (New) A method according to Claim 4, wherein each partial area corresponds to a respective band obtained by dividing the one-page image into strip-shaped bands, and the printing output is performed one band at a time.

27. (New) A storage medium which computer-readably stores a program including:

an input step of sequentially inputting image data corresponding to plural partial areas obtained by dividing a one-page image;

a judgment step of judging whether the input image data corresponds to a margin area or a non-margin area;

a detection step of detecting whether or not the image data corresponding to the non-margin area represents at least a part of a specific image; and

a control step of controlling printing output of the image data corresponding to the non-margin area, in accordance with the detected result in said detection step,

wherein said detection step detects whether or not predetermined electronic watermark information has been embedded in the image data corresponding to the non-margin area.

28. (New) An image processing apparatus comprising:

input means for sequentially inputting image data corresponding to plural partial areas obtained by dividing a one-page image;

judgment means for judging whether the input image data corresponds to a margin area or a non-margin area;

detection means for detecting whether or not the image corresponding to the non-margin area represents at least a part of a specific image; and

control means for controlling printing output of the image data corresponding to the non-margin area, in accordance with the detected result of said detection means,

wherein said detection step detects whether or not predetermined electronic watermark information has been embedded in the image data corresponding to the non-margin area.

29. (New) A method according to Claim 17, wherein said block selection step selects the blocks arranged at dispersed positions.

30. (New) A method according to Claim 17, wherein said block selection step selects the blocks arranged at a certain interval.

31. (New) A method according to Claim 17, wherein, when it is judged in said specific image judgment step that the input image corresponds to the specific image, said process step stops inputting of the image.

32. (New) A method according to Claim 17, wherein said specific image judgment step judges whether or not the input image corresponds to the specific image, by extracting an electronic watermark of the input image with a software process.

33. (New) A method according to Claim 17, wherein the image is input by a flatbed scanner.

34. (New) A method according to Claim 17, wherein, when it is judged in said specific image judgment step that the input step image corresponds to the specific image, said process step does not perform a printer driver process to the input image.

35. (New) A method according to Claim 17, wherein said process step displays the judged result in said specific image judgment step.

36. (New) A method according to Claim 17, wherein the blocks are selected like checkers.

37. (New) A storage medium which computer-readably stores a program including:

an input step of inputting image information according to an image;

a block selection step of selecting, in the image information input in said input step, the image information of a block having a predetermined size;

a specific image judgment step of judging whether or not the input image corresponds to a specific image having a predetermined feature, in accordance with the image information of the block; and

a process step of processing the input image in accordance with the judged result in said specific image judgment step,

wherein said input step inputs the image information of a band area having a predetermined size from the image, and said block selection step selects the image information of the block having the predetermined size within the band area.

38. (New) An image processing apparatus comprising:

input means for inputting image information according to an image;

block selection means for selecting, in the image information input by said input means, the image information of a block having a predetermined size;

specific image judgment means for judging whether or not the input image corresponds to a specific image having a predetermined feature, in accordance with the image information of the block; and

process means for processing the input image in accordance with the judged result of said specific image judgment means,

wherein said input means inputs the image information of a band area having a predetermined size from the image, and said block selection means selects the image information of the block having the predetermined size within the band area.